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SUBJECT: G77 SUMMIT: NEW DEVELOPMENT FUND PROPOSED AT CLOSING

1. Summary. The G77 South Summit ended June 16 with a proposal for a new development fund to which Qatar would contribute \$20 million. Leaders called on developed nations to meet the target of 0.7% of GDP toward overseas assistance. In addition to improved access to markets in developed economies, leaders exhorted states of the "south" to strengthen their own regional trade ties. The Qatari Amir called for establishment of free trade zones in Africa, Asia, and South America. But it will be hard to gain focus from the 66-point Doha Declaration from the Non-Aligned Movement and the 118-point Doha Plan of Action issued at the closing of the summit. End Summary.

Development Assistance and Trade

2. At the opening the plenary session of the G77+China Summit June 15, the Qatari Amir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, proposed the creation of a "South Fund for Development and Human Circumstances" and offered \$20 million to launch it. China and India each pledged \$2 million. The fund would address hunger, poverty, and "human catastrophes" in the developing world. He said that starting in 2006, Qatar is committed to giving the amount of overseas development assistance prescribed by the UN's Millennium Development Goals. 15% of the assistance would be allocated to least developed countries. However, the exact level of assistance was not specified by the Amir. Development assistance was elaborated upon in the 118-item "Doha Plan of Action," which includes sections on globalization, knowledge and technology, south-south cooperation, and north-south relations.

3. Among his general remarks, the Amir called for setting up three free trade zones (one each in Africa, Asia, and South America) to stimulate south-south and north-south trade. "Trade among the countries of the south is not as substantial as south-to-north," he said, "but it complements it."

Speeches on State of the Developing World

4. There were unsurprising speeches by Prime Minister PJ Patterson of Jamaica, Jean Ping of Senegal (outgoing president of the UNGA), Jean-Louis Schiltz (Minister of Cooperation and Humanitarian Action of Luxembourg, representing the G-8 nations), Louise Frechette (Deputy Secretary General of the UN), and Carlos Lage (vice president of the Council of State of Cuba). President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, called the developing world "unstable, crisis-ridden, backward... and a moral albatross to the developed world." Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia (chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement) said, "The voices supporting unfettered globalization are now confined to the periphery. However, economic uncertainty still surrounds us. It would seem therefore that five years since our last meeting, things have not improved." The PM of Bangladesh said, "We had high hopes that globalization would benefit developing countries.... Sadly, this has not happened."

The Political Declaration

5. The Doha Declaration was issued as a separate document from the Doha Plan of Action, reflecting the separate organizational of the G77 and the Non-Aligned Movement. Like its sister document, the Doha Declaration called on developed countries to devote 0.7% of their GDP to overseas assistance. Directly naming the United States, he called for an end to the embargo against Cuba and expressed concern about the impact of the Syrian Accountability Act. It expressed "deep concern" regarding the 1998 U.S. attack on the Al-Shifa facility in Khartoum, Sudan.

Cuba Lashes at U.S.

6. The Cuban delegate, Carlos Lage, was the only speaker who mentioned the U.S. by name, in a statement on behalf of Fidel Castro. It was da capo an attack on the US as an aggressive, over-consuming despoiler of the environment and protector of terrorists (Luis Posada Carriles). One example: "George W. Bush proclaims the right to wage preemptive war on 60 or more countries while he manipulates the United Nations, declares its charter obsolete, and destroys international law. Let us, the eternally excluded, join our efforts to have a sustainable world order."

Comment

17. A 66-point Doha Declaration and a 118-point Plan of Action ensures that the follow-through will be nearly impossible. Developing countries were able reiterate priorities such as debt forgiveness, increased development assistance from the industrialized countries, and technology transfer. Their message was that no great progress had been made since the Havana meeting. For Qatar, the summit was an opportunity to demonstrate that it has the capacity to host such a large event and to win friends among poorer nations. The "South Fund for Development" is a welcome product of the summit, but it will have to take material shape.

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